Unless Swerving (as a Strategy) for War or Joining (Another) Company

The mujahid may use any permitted weapon or fighting method to achieve the goal of his jihad, which is defeating his enemy and establishing the religion of Allah in the land where He granted empowerment. And from these weapons and methods he should choose those which suit him in each and every stage of his long jihad.

Despite the Islamic State having lost its empowerment in many areas, the establishment of the religion of Allah did not stop, by the grace of Allah, the Lord of all creation. In every place their Mawla decrees jihad against the mushrikin, the mujahideen still impose it, and this - without a doubt - is one of the greatest ranks in promoting virtue and prohibiting vice.

Fighting on fixed fronts and against creeping armies in order to conquer the land is a suitable fighting method for the stage of empowerment, because it offers the possibility of taking control over the land and establishing the religion in it, and protecting it from capture by the mushrikin and their promulgating shirk and kufr in it. Likewise, the method of fighting the fleeing gangs is most suitable for the mujahidin in those areas where the mushrikin took total control.

The primary objective of guerrilla warfare is to inflict harm to the enemies, and this is a legitimate goal, because it is seeking Allah's pleasure. Allah incited for this, saying: "Fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands and will disgrace them and give you victory over them and satisfy the breasts of a believing people" (At-Tawba: 14). Harm is achieved by killing and injuring them, arresting them, and taking ghanimah of their property and destroying it.

Accordingly, the mujahidin guerrillas focus their efforts to inflict the biggest losses to the enemy in terms of lives and property, and they strive to do that with minimal losses to themselves, and thus increase the parity between them. As much as they are able achieve these two conditions, the more their harm upon the enemy continues and the more he becomes weaker and they become stronger, until the circumstances are more suitable to move from guerrilla warfare to other stages necessary to achieve empowerment on the land.

At the beginning, these blessed guerrillas were not assigned to holding territories, because that matter was beyond their capabilities, nor were they tasked to persist in the face of the enemy in battles they did not believe they could win. This is because the mujahidin in those areas are usually small in number, they have weak weaponry, and they do not possess territory in which they can arrange their affairs and mobilize their supporters, them confronting an enemy who does hold territory, is large in number and equipment, and is prepared to suppress any initiative by the mujahidin, to eliminate them and pull out their plant before it takes root in the ground and grows to the sky, thus they come paralyzed in front of it and defeated.

In light of their situation, they do not need to overload themselves with more than they can endure, such as holding onto territory while they are few in number and weak, and their enemy surpasses them by the hundreds or even thousands. Their Lord permitted them to draw back to safety, then come back to attack the enemy again in the time and place that achieves harm unto it and success, then return to disappearing before it begins to mobilize against them and hurt them.

This is a form of swerving as a strategy, where the Lord of all creation permitted the believers to draw back in wars. "O you who have believed, when you meet those who disbelieve advancing [for battle], do not turn to them your backs [in flight]. And whoever turns his back to them on such a day, unless swerving (as a strategy) for war or joining (another) company, has certainly returned with anger (upon him) from Allah, and his refuge is Hell - and wretched is the destination" (Al-Anfal: 16-15). Imam at-Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him) said about "Unless swerving (as a strategy for war)": "Unless persisting to fight his enemy, seeking a weakness in him so that he can inflict a wound, then repeat it." (Jami' al-Bayaan). And Imam al-Baghawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Turning around can be seen as defeat, but his intention is to look for an opening, and he wants the initiative." (Ma'alim al-Tanzil) The mujahid is he who overcomes his thought of defeat in battle in front of his enemy. He accepts defeat in front of that enemy to avoid losses, but he intends to return, to pounce on him when he sees himself strong and his enemy weak.

Therefore, the Islamic State soldiers must focus their efforts on exhausting their enemies to the fullest extent at this stage, and not become distracted by the issue of quickly achieving empowerment on the land, for that is the inevitable result of their jihad by Allah's permission and it will be grated to them soon. And the cause for its fulfillment is what they are currently engaged in fighting and harming the the enemies of the religion.

Here, we do not mean exhaustion to be simply weakening the enemy to force him to withdraw from some of the territory so can take possess it and gain empowerment over it, but striving to create a situation in which his hemorrhaging will lead to his death or greatly tire him where he cannot stand and fight us except after a very long time, during which we would prepare ourselves to repel him and crush his power. The costly war waged by the enemy will then plant desperation and hopelessness from attaining victory in his heart and mind, so he will see our victory over him in any possible confrontation as an inevitable reality.

So increase the raids against your enemies, O Islamic State soldiers, and do not come at them except by surprise. Do not let them take from you what they desire by confronting you while they are in a better situation than yourselves. Spare your capital - your men and your weapons - and do not risk them, so that your victories continue and increase as the days pass, by Allah's permission. In worship, Allah does not charge us with that beyond our capacity, and He does not fix a time on us. "Allah does not charge a soul except (with that within) its capacity" (Al-Baqara: 286).

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation.